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ABSTRACT

This discussion of school choice places the issue in its historical and contemporary contexts, describes the major choice plans through case studies, analyzes the outcomes of school choice, and examines the underlying assumptions of the market model of educational reform. School choice is one method by which public education can be reinvented, as the case studies from Minnesota, Cambridge and Fall River (Massachusetts), East Harlem and White Plains (New York), and Milwaukee (Wisconsin) illustrate. Research has found that school choice makes little difference in terms of academic achievement, although its secondary effects can benefit the schools' academic climates. Choice can result in greater or lesser educational equity depending on how it is managed, but it does have beneficial communal effects that are only marginally related to achievement and improvement. A proposal is presented to establish an educational trust fund to give each student an educational share that can be applied to current public schools and new model schools. Parent information and consumer protection would be essential elements of the plan. (Contains 138 references.) (SLD)

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